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SPORTS

Winchester football gets ready for another winning campaign with practices, scrimmages leading up to the home opener against Peabody on Sept. 12

JOE MCCONNELL | SPORTS EDITOR

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Winchester Red & Black junior captain Bryan Harrison (7) drags down a Reading running back during a game last year. Harrison returns once again this season as a captain of the team, and he will be joined in that role by Mike Ficociello, Gianni DePrimeo and Lucas Sekino. COURTESY PHOTO/ JEN JOHNSON

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Winchester High School football Head Coach Wally Dembowki is beginning his 15th year along the Red &Black sidelines, and is already hard at work to ensure another winning season.

The grind for him started on Aug. 15, the first official day of practice, to get this year's squad ready for what lies ahead on the schedule in the Middlesex League and hopefully, beyond in Division 2 once the playoffs get underway.

Last year, the Winchester boys were the sixth seed going into the playoffs after accumulating a 6-2 record. They then defeated Peabody (4-5), the 11th seed, in the Round of 16, 35-27. But Marshfield (9-2, third seed), eliminated them from the postseason the following week in the Elite 8, 48-28.

However, they rebounded nicely to beat Thanksgiving rival Woburn, 35-28 to end the season on a successful note with an overall 8-3 record.

Winchester junior running back Gianni DePrimeo (2) gets up to speed for a big gain against Mars
a Division 2 Round of 8 game in Marshfield last November. He's now ready for his senior seaso
captains on the team, along with Mike Ficociello, Lucas Sekino and Bryan Harrison. COURTES
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But the page has now been turned to a brand-new season, where hope springs eternal for all high school football teams in the state, and so far, Dembowski likes what he sees with his team.

“Practices have been good with some energy,” he told the Winchester News earlier this week. “The kids are working hard, and are all healthy. We have been practicing daily, and had a joint practice against Lynn English last Saturday (Aug. 23). We were able to get some Red Zone work in, along with some two-minute drills.”

The Red & Black were scheduled to go up against Lynn Classical in another joint practice on Tuesday, Aug. 26, before scrimmaging Stoneham two nights later at home on Aug. 28 at 7 p.m. They will travel to Billerica to take on the host Indians to close the exhibition slate on Sept. 4 at 6 p.m.

“The scrimmages and joint practices provide us with the opportunity to find out the correct working pieces at each position, while continuing to see who will be on the second and third teams, and who will be our main special team players moving forward,” said Dembowski. “It’s never about winning or losing right now; it's only about development.”

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Dembowski welcomed close to 60 players from freshmen to seniors to the first day of practice on Aug. 15.

Linebacker Bryan Harrison, tight end/defensive lineman Mike Ficociello, running back/defensive back Gianni DePrimeo and offensive and defensive lineman Lucas Sekino are this year’s captains.

Altogether, there are 22 seniors, 17 juniors and 11 sophomores, w
dot the varsity roster this fall.

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Dembowski plans on installing the prospective offensive and defensive starting lineups, not to mention the special teams this week.

“We have already tested all the players in the weight room, and also ran them through conditioning and sprint workouts to get them ready for this week,” the coach said.

The expectations are always the same for the team from year to year, and that’s to have a winning record, compete for the league title and go deeper than the quarterfinals in the playoffs.

“We’ve lost the league title the past two years by a total of just seven points,” said Dembowski.

Belmont escaped with a 15-9 triumph in 2023 to secure the league title over Dembowski’s crew. Last year in Reading, the Rockets pinned a 29-28 heartbreaker on them. King Phillip in 2023 and Marshfield last year then knocked them out of the playoffs in the quarterfinals. They hope to reverse that trend this fall.

Quarterbacks Ronan O’Connell, a senior, and Peter Alexopoulos, a junior; wide receiver and defensive back Ted Budreski, a Georgetown commit for lacrosse; wide receiver and strong safety Ryan Martin, a soon-to-be college lacrosse commit; Harrison, a three-year starter and Harvard commit as a linebacker; Ficociello, a Bates College commit; and Deprimeo, a Navy Prep lacrosse commit, are among some of the notables who will be counted on this year. Shaun Garrett and Sekino are also key starters, who are back from last year’s team.

The coaching staff will be looking for strong safety and running back Nick Rotondi, and linebackers Quinn Pimentel and Will Mango, all of them seniors, to step up this year among others to help lighten the loa varsity starters.

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But there are still a couple of more weeks left to iron everything out, before the regular season gets underway at home against Peabody on Friday night, Sept. 12, at 6:30 p.m.

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SPORTS

Winchester boys basketball heads to Bridgewater-Raynham for Sweet 16 game after beating Lexington in postseason opener

It was the third meeting this year between Middlesex League boys basketball rivals Lexington (16-5, 11th seed) and Winchester (17-4, 22nd seed). They split the first two during the regular season, thus making this Round of 32 postseason matchup the

SPORTS

Winchester wrestling enjoys Top 10 finish at state divisional meet; senior captains move on to All-States

After the Winchester High qualified wrestlers competed hard over two days last weekend (Feb. 20, 21) in the State Division 1 Meet at North Andover High School, Mother Nature gave them a break t recuperate with Monday's resulted in two days off from school. There

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impromptu rubber game of this year's series, with the

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March 3, 2026

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SPORTS

Winchester boys hockey advances to the Sweet 16 after beating Wachusett in the tournament opener

The Winchester High boys hockey team (12-9-2), the 17th seed, edged the 16th-seeded Wachusett Regional Mountaineers (18-2-1), 5-4 in a Round of 32 Division 1 state tournament game at Westborough's Northstar Ice Arena on Feb. 25. The Red & Black will now take on top seed Catholic Memorial (18-2-1)

JOE MCCONNELL | SPORTS EDITOR

February 27, 2026

SPORTS

With postseason starting Friday night, WHS boys hoop seniors English, Sarpong, Burbine join Middlesex League elite

The Winchester High boys basketball team, the 22nd seed, will take on Middlesex League rival Lexington, the 11th seed, to begin the Division 1 state tournament in the Round of 32 on Friday night, Feb. 27, starting at 6 p.m. These teams are so evenly matched, beginning with the

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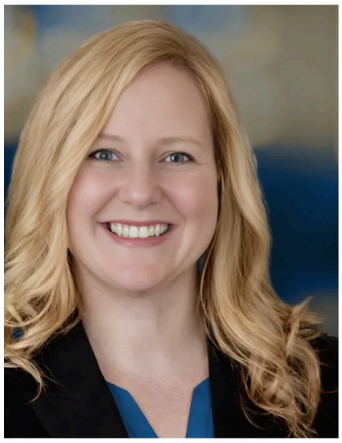

NEWS

Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 4, 2026

FEATURES

'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. Set in the 1920s, this iconic production is sure to leave the audience wanting more. Performances will

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

March 4, 2026

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On

NEWS

Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and

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Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026

his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

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